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COLD-WEATHER FLYING

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Authority on Meteorology

How would you like to fly at a temperature of 70 below zero, Fahrenheit? That is the possibility that confronts the aviator in Alaska during the winter. Some of the difficulties of winter flying in that part of the world are described in the Monthly Weather Review by R. L. Frost, who writes:

"As a rule flying activities cease when the temperature falls to 40 or 45 below zero, but this is not always the case. There are any number of flights made in temperatures of minus 50 and minus 60. The coldest flight on record for Alaska and perhaps the coldest made anywhere in the world occurred at Eagle in January 1934, when a temperature of 71 below zero was recorded. For six months of the year all planes operate on skis and landings can be made almost anywhere on the snow-covered ground.

"The only hangars available in the interior of Alaska are those located at Fairbanks. When planes are forced to remain outdoors in cold weather they frequently become coated with frost in a very short time. This must be wiped off, as the frost so disturbs the airflow over the wings that their lifting power is lessened and a take-off is hazardous. In cold weather the oil must be drained from the motor immediately after landing. Before beginning a flight the motor is covered with a canvas hood and warmed with a gasoline torch. The oil must be heated, poured in, and the warmed motor started at once."

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